(c) what is the reaction of Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE (SHRI BHUVNESH CHATURVEDI): (a) to (c) Government are aware of the news-item in question. According to information made available by the State Government, a case has been registered under the J & K Officials Secrets Act in connection with missing maps referred in the news item. There is no proposal under consideration of the State Government for the posting of any officer to any sensitive assignment, including any post in the office of Resident Commissioner in Delhi, as mentioned in the report.

The other issues brought out in the report are of a general nature and no specific details have been given. Hence it is not possible to give any reply to the same.

Statement by Ministers on J&K

355. PROF. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Union Ministers have been making controversial and contrary statements over the affairs of the Jammu and Kashmir thereby sending wrong signals not only to the people of the country but to the world;

(b) if so, the reasons for absence of cohesiveness in the utterances of the Union Ministers;

(c) the steps taken to check such uncalled for utterances by the Union Ministers; and

(d) the amount of damage that these utterances have caused to the Nation or are likely to cause in times to come?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE (SHRI BHUVNESH CHATURVEDI): There have been reports from time (a) to (d) There hvae been reports from time to time in the media about statements made by Union Ministers in respect of Jammu and Kashmir. It is not possible or feasible to give any comments in this regard, particularly since no specific instances or issue have been cited in the question. Neither is it possible to give any facts or comments in respect of such issues as contained in part (d) of the question.

Handling of Kashmir affairs by Prime Minister

356. DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI:

SHRI TRILOKI NATH CHATURVEDI:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state whether Government's attention has been to the press reports to the effect that the Kashmir affairs will be handled by him directly, if so what are the implications of this decision and the reasons for shifting the matter from the Home Ministry?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE (SHRI BHUVNESH CHATURVEDI): By a notification dated 1 November, 1994, a separate Department of Jammu and Kashmir Affairs has been created, with the Prime Minister as the Minister in-charge. The existing Kashmir Division in the Ministry of Home Affairs has been transferred to the news Department. 16 additional posts, including that of Joint Secretary with the requisite support staff, have also been created with a view to further strengthening the Department.

These steps would enable the Government to devote focussed attention to the situation in the State.